than his public spirit. He achieved a " particularly honoured position" in the financial life of Great Britain when in March, 1847, he offered the Government his financial assistance for dealing with the miserable condition of Ireland—then at the lowest point of its misfortunes. The Irish Famine Loan of £8,000,000 was subsequently raised without any view to profit through his agency, in collaboration with his greatest competitors, the house of Baring. Baron Lionel (who in 1858 became the first Jewish Member of Parliament) will be permanently remembered in the history of the British Empire for the public-spirited manner in which he came to the assistance of Lord Beaconsfield in 1875, when he advanced the money for the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, and took all risks pending the approval of Parliament. But for this action, it is doubtful whether Beaconsfield's *coup* could have succeeded.

§vn

The most important economic function of the Jews in our day has been in a field very far removed from that of finance. In various branches of industry, they have played an important share in that process—bound up with mass-production and improved distribution—which has wrought in our day a profound sociological change. Time was—and not so very long ago—when the rift-between the rich and poor was more profound by far than it is at present, and when even the

lower middle classes had to content themselves with the ugliest, coarsest, and barest necessities of life. The environment of the labouring classes was even more drab. Luxuries were completely out of the poor man's reach: his amusements were primitive: his clothing was coarse and shapeless, and could seldom be replaced: the division